

8030

A SECOND

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

Transubstantiation:

IN WHICH THE

Sixth Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel is
particularly considered.

PREACHED AT THE

Merchants Lecture at *Salters-Hall*,

APRIL 22, 1735.

By *W. HARRIS*, D. D.

The SECOND EDITION.



L O N D O N:

Printed for R. FORD, at the *Angel*; and R. HETT,
at the *Bible and Crown*; both in the *Poultry*.

M DCC XXXV.





JOHN vi. 53.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

TH O' the principal support of the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is drawn from the words of the institution of the Lord's-supper, which I have already considered ; yet because this discourse of our Lord in this chapter is made great use of to this purpose by the Popish writers, and particularly insisted on in the late *Profession of faith*, and is the only place in the New Testament besides, which can give any colour or countenance to it ; I have therefore thought it might be proper to consider this matter at this time, which has been so often mistaken by them, and perhaps is not always

A 2

distinctly

distinctly understood among our selves. It will be sufficient to the present purpose, and lead us to take in the whole chapter, so far as it relates to this subject, to consider a little particularly these two enquiries:

1. Whether this discourse of our Lord has any direct relation to the *Lord's-supper*?
2. If it has any reference to it, Whether there is any ground in it for the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*?

I. Whether it has any *direct* relation to the Lord's-supper: *i. e.* Whether this was the primary design of it, and what our Lord intended to instruct the people about at this time: If it was not, there can be no pretence for this doctrine in this discourse; and that it has no *direct* relation to it will I think sufficiently appear, by considering all the circumstances of the case, and fixing the true sense of it, *viz.* the *occasion* of speaking it; the *persons* to whom it was directed; the *time* of it, and the proper *meaning* of it, as here explained by our Lord himself.

1. Let us consider to this purpose the *occasion* of it. If we consult the former part of the chapter, we shall find that this was the miracle of the *loaves*, and the mention of the *manna* in the wilderness. Our Lord having crossed the sea, or the lake of *Galilee*
in

in that part of it which washes the city of *Tiberias*, which was built by *Herod* in honour of *Tiberius Cæsar*; and went into the desert for greater retirement, the multitude who had seen his miracles followed him. The compaffionate Redeemer, who was concerned for the bodies as well as the souls of men, was solicitous for their refreshment in fo desolate a place, and *fed five thousand men, besides the women and children, with five barley loaves, and two small fishes*: A ver. 11. small provision for fo great a number; but he *knew what he would do*; for when they — 6. were all filled they gathered the fragments together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments which remained over and above to — 12, 13. them who had eaten. Each of the twelve disciples filled his basket with fragments, as they had *distributed* the loaves to the people. Upon the sight of this miracle the multitude were fo struck with amazement and conviction, that they said, *This is of a truth that prophet who should come into the world*, i. e. the promised Messiah who has been fo long expected: and in the sudden transport of their zeal, were for *taking him by force and making him their king*. 14. 15. They were for lifting under him as their head and chief, agreeably to the worldly notions and spirit of the carnal *Jews*, expecting probably under such a captain to be delivered from the power of the *Romans*,

mans, as the Israelites were by Moses from the Egyptians.

- When they came back to *Capernaum* the next day, following Jesus and the disciples who departed the evening before, our Lord knowing the temper of their minds, and the motives of their action, reproved them for their worldly-mindedness; *Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracle, and attended to the true design of it, but because ye did*
21. *eat of the loaves and were filled*; and called off their minds from earthly things, and put them upon believing in him. He took the advantage of feeding their bodies to instruct their minds. They took offence at the freedom he used with them, and altered their mind and behaviour towards him: So changeable and inconstant is the mind of the multitude, and so easily, and sometimes unreasonably, do they run into the greatest extremes. They now demanded a sign of him; *What sign shewest thou then, that we may believe? What dost thou work?* This was very unreasonable, when the multitude had followed him over the sea, because they *saw the miracles he had done on*
2. *them who were diseased*; and they had seen the miracles of the loaves but the day before. Upon this occasion, they tell him of the manna in the wilderness; *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, as 'tis*
31. *written, He gave them bread from heaven, q.d.*
If

If thou wouldst have us believe on thee, let us see such a miracle as *Moses* wrought in the wilderness, when he fed a whole nation of men for forty years, with bread from heaven. This was said by way of diminution and disparagement of the miracle he had wrought.

These two things occasioned our Lord's discourse in the following part of the chapter, and led him to speak of himself in this manner, under the figure of the *bread of God*, and the *bread from heaven*: a way of speaking familiar in our Lord's discourses, and common among the *Jews*. So he took occasion from the *water of Jacob's well*, to discourse to the woman of *Samarita*, of the *waters of life*. This therefore Chap. iv. was very agreeable to the occasion, and a natural transition to such a description of himself, without any need to suppose the sacrament intended by it, which is not once mentioned throughout the whole chapter, nor any of the outward signs which belong to it; and which the occasion did not at all lead him to. This will further appear if you consider,

2. The *persons* who were spoken to. 'Tis plain from the beginning of the chapter, that they were the people of *Caper-naum*, who had followed him into the desert, and seen his miracles; and that they were spoken in the synagogue, where our Lord

Lord was used to take all opportunities of instructing the people, and teaching his doctrine; *These things said he in the synagogue as he taught at Capernaum.*

Now it will be to our present purpose to consider the *temper* and character under which they are here represented. It plainly appears, that they were *worldly-minded* and insincere; for they followed him not
 26. for the *miracle*, but for the *loaves*, and only to be fed and entertained by him, without their own labour and care. They were offended at him when he calls them to seek heavenly things, and to *labour not for the*
 27. *meat which perisheth*, but for *that which endureth to everlasting life*. And when he
 34. first told them of the *bread of God which cometh down from heaven*, and *giveth life to the world*; which they understood of the present life, and then they said, *Evermore give us this bread*: Tho' *Moses* wrought many other miracles, they only take notice of the manna in the wilderness. They were wholly intent upon present good, and sensible gratification. They *minded earthly things*, and set their hearts and *affections upon things on the earth, not on things above*,
 Rom. xvi. and were like those who *served not the Lord*
 18. *Jesus Christ, but their own bellies*.

And they were *prejudiced* and captious, who instead of being willing to be instructed, and attend to his doctrine, mis-
 construed

construed his words, and understood him in a gross and carnal manner, contrary to the occasion and true design of them: So they murmured at him, because he said, *I am the bread of life which came down from heaven.* They cavilled at his birth and kindred, and reproached him with his mean descent and appearance; *Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know; how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven;* as if they would charge him with a falshood. So when our Lord tells them, *No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him;* he don't design to excuse them, but to blame them. He drew them with the cords of a man, by the powerful motives of his doctrine and miracles, and the common influences of his grace; and so the Father is drawing men to Christ wherever the gospel comes; but they drew back, and always resisted the Holy Ghost. They wrested his words with great perverseness; *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* Some among the disciples, who seemed to own and follow him, said, *This is a hard saying, who can hear it;* too hard to be digested; and afterwards went back and followed no more with him. *

40.

42.

44, 65.

Hosea xi.

Acts vii.

51.

52.

60.

66.

B

ted

* ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ may refer either to χρόνος or to ρήματ^{ος} understood; from that time, or upon the occasion of that discourse: Our translators follow the former; I think the latter more natural.

ted their appearing profession and regard to him when they found his doctrine was not for their turn, and was wholly calculated to promote their spiritual good, not their worldly interests and ends. Upon this account he tells them ; *You also have*
 36. *seen me, or known me, † and believed not.* This was the true reason of their offence, not the want of sufficient means of conviction ; for they saw his miracles, the evidences of his divine authority and commission ; but because they were not rightly disposed towards him, and did not like his doctrine. And he upbraids them at another time, *Thou Capernaum, who art exalted up unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell ; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day : It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in*
 Matt. xi. *the day of judgment, than for thee.* They
 23. were incurably obstinate in their infidelity under all their advantages for faith, and tho' it was the place of his ordinary residence, and mighty works.

Now

† *ἐωχνησθε* may probably signify a transient and careless view of things without due consideration, or close attention of mind to the true reason and design of them : but in the 40th, where he says, *Every one who hath seen the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life ;* the word *θεωρῶν* may signify a close and attentive consideration, or deep contemplating and weighing the circumstances and reasons of the case, which belongs to upright minds, and is productive of faith,

Now is it at all likely, or suitable to this state of things, that our Lord should tell such people as these, in such circumstances, and upon such an occasion, of the sacrament of the Lord's-supper; the sacred institution peculiar to his followers, who were so disposed towards him, and were ready to forsake him? Would it not have been quite disagreeable to his usual conduct, to go off from the immediate occasion of his discourse, to a thing so foreign to it, and to persons so improper, and who were never like to have any concern in it? Add to this,

3. The *time* of it, or when our Lord held this discourse with the *Caparnaites*. 'Tis a circumstance of some consideration, and will give further light to the matter, if we can fix the time when it was spoken. It appears from the beginning of the chapter, that it was about the time of the passover: *And the passover, the feast of the Jews* was nigh; or near approaching. The passover was an annual commemoration of their deliverance out of *Egypt*, and the greatest *festival* in the Jewish church, and which occasioned the greatest resort from all quarters. It was observed in the middle of the month *Nisan*, which answers to our *March*, and so accounts for the expression in the 10th verse, that there was *much grass*

4.

A Second Discourse

in the place where the five thousand were made to sit down.

This discourse happened a little *before* the celebration of the passover; and we find by the evangelists, that the Lord's-supper was instituted *at* the time of the passover, a little before his sufferings. Now supposing it was only the third passover after his baptism, which is the lowest computation, for some think it was the second; and there will be above a year's distance from the time of this discourse to the time of the institution. So that the Lord's-supper was not yet in being, and was not instituted till at least a whole year after. It can't be thought reasonable that our Lord should speak directly in a large discourse, to a multitude of people who were now offended with him, and grown averse to him, and of whom many forsook him, as soon as he had finished it, of the prime ordinance of the gospel worship, so long before the institution of it, and of which, I think, we find not the least mention or allusion to it, in any part of the gospel besides.

And tho' he speaks to them of his death, or giving *his flesh for the life of the world*, which was at as great a distance as the institution of the sacrament; yet that was the prime design of his coming into the world, and was only occasionally dropt under covert expressions, and not the professed subject of it neither. 'Tis much
more

more reasonable to suppose that his discourse should turn upon some useful subject, and which more immediately concerned themselves, and was more suitable to the temper of the people, and the present circumstances of things, than that he should speak to them of a thing irrelative to the subject and occasion of it, which was not now in being, and could not be understood by any who heard it. But to come nearer to the matter;

4. Let us consider the proper meaning of this discourse, as here explained by our Lord himself. And because this is the most direct and considerable proof, and upon which the merits of the cause must turn, I shall represent it more distinctly.

Now I observe in the first place, That our Lord explains himself by *believing* in him, or receiving and embracing his doctrine: And this he not only dropt occasionally, but is carried quite thro' the chapter, and repeated over and over, to lead them to a right sense of his words, and guard them from misconstruction. Thus he tells them, *This is the work of God, that ye BELIEVE on him whom he hath sent.* I am the bread of life; he who COMETH to me shall never hunger, and he who BELIE-*

VETH

* The allusion here is lost in our translation, which would appear by thus rendering the 27th, *Work not chiefly for the meat which perisheth*, ἐργάζεσθε. 28th, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God*, ἐργάζωμεθα. 29th, *This is the work of God*, τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔργον.

37. VETH in me shall never thirst. And, *All that the Father hath given me, shall COME to me; and him who COMETH unto me, I will in no wise cast out*; which is a usual expression in the New Testament, to signify *believing* in him, or becoming his disciples, and taking him for our teacher and
40. Lord. So again, *This is the will of him who sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and BELIEVETH in him, may have everlasting life*. And in another expression of
56. great force, to the same purpose: *He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, DWELLETH in me, and I in him*. This
- 1 Ep. iv. 16. is explained by the same apostle, *He who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him*. The sense is, he loveth me, and delighteth in me, and is thereby intimately united to me, and communicates from me, as the branches from the vine, or the food which is digested and incorporated with the body; and I have a special favour and regard to him, and will be present with him, and manifest myself to him.

From all this it appears plainly, That he speaks in these figurative expressions, taken from the occasion of his discourse, of *believing* in him or receiving his doctrine which he brought from heaven, and which is the proper food of the soul, as bread is of the body; all the precepts of purity and humility, of meekness and patience, of self-denial and heavenly-mindedness, and particularly the doctrine of his death, or giving
his

his life for the world. And though this may seem a harsh figure in our language, yet it was very agreeable to the Jewish idiom, and easily understood among the Jews. Nothing was more frequent in the eastern languages, than to represent receiving a doctrine, and harkening to instruction, by *eating* and *drinking it*, or imbibing and digesting it, as proper nourishment and food. So we read in the Old Testament: *Wisdom* is introduced saying, *Come eat of my bread, and drink of my wine, which I have mingled*; i. e. the instructions which I have prepared: *Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness*. And so in the Prophet: *Ho, every one who thirsteth, come to the waters of life; come buy and eat; buy wine and milk, without money and without price*. And in the New Testament, our Lord speaks in the same figure: *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness*. And he says of himself, *My meat is to do the will of him who sent me*. The apostle speaks of being *nourished up in the words of faith and sound doctrine*. The first principles of christianity are called *milk for babes*, and the *sincere milk of the word*; and more improved knowledge, *meat for strong men*. The expression of *his flesh and blood*, in this sense, is no harder to be understood, than when the apostle says of the Christians,

Eph. v.
30.

Christians, *Ye are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.**

- Besides, I observe again, That this *eating* and *drinking* stands connected with *eternal life*. This is very remarkable in the whole discourse, and repeated upon all occasions: He keeps this still in view, and holds it up to them continually, as the great benefit and advantage by him, and the necessary and inseparable consequence and effect of it. To this purpose 'tis remarkable, That he prefers it to the *manna* in the wilderness. When the *Jews* said, *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness*; he answers, My
 32, 33. *Father gives you the true bread from heaven, and which giveth life to the world. And, This is the bread which came down from*
 49. *heaven, not as your fathers did eat bread in the wilderness, and are dead; but he who eateth of this bread shall live for ever. And*
 58. *again, This is the bread which came down from heaven, that he may eat thereof and not die. 'Tis of a noble original, of a more excellent kind; it serves a higher purpose, and is of a greater extent. 'Tis bread from heaven, and the bread of life, and which gives life to the world, and of which he who eateth shall live for ever.*

So

* The Talmudists frequently mention *eating the Messiah*, for partaking of his benefits. *Lightf.* Horæ Heb. in Joh. vi. 53. And *Philo Judæus* says, Τὸ φάγειν ὅτι σὺμβολὸν τρυφῆς καὶ χαρῆς. De Leg. Alleg. And Clem. Alexan. Βρώσας ἰδοὺ πάσας τὰ θεῖα λόγῳ ἢ γινώσκας ὅτι τὸ θεῖον ἐστίν. Strom. Lib. 5.

So he speaks all along of *life* as the consequence of it; *He who cometh to me shall never hunger, and he who believeth in me shall never thirst*: He shall want no necessary help, and shall be satisfied with suitable good. So the final felicity is represented, *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.* And, *This is the will of him who sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* Verily, verily, I say unto you, he who believeth on me hath everlasting life: hath a present right, and is secure of the future possession. *As the living Father sent me, and I live by the Father, so he who eateth me shall live by me. And, he who eateth this bread shall live for ever.* Here is life, and everlasting life; and raising up at the last day, to signify a state of glorious blessedness and immortality. So our Lord tells the woman of Samaria, in the same figure of speech, *But whosoever drinketh of the waters which I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the waters which I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

35.

Rev. vii.

16.

40.

47.

57, 58.

John iv.

Now as all these various representations import something special and peculiar to the persons of whom they are spoken, and plainly signify the great blessings of the gospel, and benefit by the death of Christ;

14.

so they all agree to the true sense of the expressions as here represented and explained ; that is, as they signify *faith* in him, or an hearty embracing his doctrine with an answerable subjection and dependence upon him. This is the great doctrine of the gospel, and constant language of it, particularly in the writings of this apostle :

Mark xvi. 16. *He who believeth shall be saved. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John iii. 16. — 36. *And, He who believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you*

Chap. xx. 31. *might have life thro' his name. And, God sent his only begotten Son into the world that*
1 Ep. iv. 10. *we might live thro' him.*

But how does this agree to the *sacrament* ? Do all who partake of that obtain everlasting life ; and is this the necessary consequence of it ? Will it secure life to all who ever once partake of it, whatsoever they are otherwise ? Did *Judas* obtain eternal life, supposing he partook of the Lord's supper, as well as the rest of the apostles, 70. when our Lord says here, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?* Does every wicked man and unbeliever, who continues under the power of sin, and is condemned by the gospel, nevertheless

theless obtain everlasting life, if he comes to the sacrament? Can this be thought possible by any who believes the doctrine of Christ, or considers the nature of the future blessedness? No, the sacrament may be eaten and drunken *unworthily*, and to *condemnation*, but true faith is always connected with eternal life. And is this absolutely *necessary* to this end, and can none be saved without it? Can it be said in this sense, *Except you eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the son of man, you have no life in you?* Then, in the strictness of the expression, good men who died under the Old Testament and before Christ suffered, are perished, and could not have everlasting life, tho' they all *eat of the same spiritual meat, and drank of the same spiritual drink*, ^{1 Cor. x.} i. e. were true believers, according to the ^{3.} dispensation they were under. And then what must become of those who thro' discouragement and fear, or by any necessary and unavoidable means, as by sickness, or distance, are prevented and disabled all their lives? If then the case stands thus, as we plainly see it does, that the *eating his flesh and drinking his blood*, which is here spoken of, is necessarily connected with everlasting life, it cannot be understood of *sacramental* eating, but only of *believing* in him.

I observe again in the next place, That our Lord himself represents it as a *spiritual*
C 2
thing,

A Second Discourse

thing, and to be *spiritually* understood. Besides the frequent expressions which run thro' the whole chapter to point out the true meaning, and guard against mistakes, when our Lord perceived that some of the disciples appeared dissatisfied, as well as the *Jews* murmured, he spake more directly to them in the close, and gave them the true *key* of the whole discourse ; *It is the spirit which*
 63. *quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing : The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* q. d. The spirit is the principle of life to the flesh, and gives it vigour and motion ; and when the spirit is withdrawn, the flesh signifies nothing, and cannot preserve its own life ; so 'tis the spiritual sense of my words which has only power to give you life : the carnal sense can be of no use to this purpose, no, though you could eat my natural flesh. The words which I have spoken to you in this discourse are spiritual and efficacious ; to be understood in a spiritual sense, and able to give life to the soul, as the spirit does to the flesh ; and you ought to understand me all along of spiritual actions, and what relates to spiritual improvement, or the nourishment and food of the mind. 'Tis not therefore my living flesh, as you absurdly imagine, but my word and doctrine, which will make you spiritually alive, and live for ever. So the apostle says
 of

of the Jewish meats, 'Tis a good thing that the heart be established with grace, i. e. the gospel, or doctrine of grace, opposed to diverse and strange doctrines, in the former part of the verse; and not with meats which have not profited them who have been occupied therein. Heb. xii.

So 'tis plain the apostle Peter understood our Lord, tho' the Jews murmured and mistook him; for when upon occasion of some of the disciples going back, and walking no more with him, he said to the rest of them, Will ye also go away? Peter readily replies, Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life? which plainly refers to what our Lord had said just before, My words are spirit, and they are life: Thy doctrine is the means of spiritual life, and the true way to eternal life; or in the language of the apostle, the words of this life; or words whereby we must be saved. Acts v. 20. Acts xi. 14.

This might be farther illustrated by the parallel discourse of our Lord to Nicodemus, when he stumbled at our Lord's expression of being born again, as the Jews here murmured at his talking to them of eating his flesh, and said, Can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? as they said here, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Our Lord answers, Verily, verily, I say —5.

A Second Discourse

say unto you, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; which is exactly parallel to the words of the text, *Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*: It follows, that *which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit*; that is, 'Tis the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. When he still continued perplexed, and said, *How can these things be?* Our Lord replies, *Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?* Art thou a learned man, and one of the great council, and understandest not what is so frequent in the Jewish language, and the writings of the rabbi's? Art thou unacquainted with the practice of the Jewish church, who, when they baptize a profelyte, call him a *new man*, and say, he is *born again*? †

I shall only further observe, That this discourse of our Lord was understood in this sense by the *antients*, who have any occasion to mention it, as far as I have observed, in the first three centuries. *Clement Alexandrinus* * says directly, “ When “ our Lord says, *Eat my flesh and drink “ my blood*, he allegorically means the drink “ of faith, and of the promises; and that “ our

† Vid. Lightf. Horæ Heb. in Joh. iv.

* Ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς εὐαγγελίας τὸ πόσιον ἀλλοιωθῆναι, τὸ δὲ αἷμα αἰνέου ἀλλοιωθῆναι. Clem. Alex. Paedag. c. 6.

“ our Lord is by way of allegory, to them
 “ who believe, meat, and flesh, and nou-
 “ rishment, and food.” *Tertullian* † says,
 “ Our Lord urges his intent by allegory,
 “ and calls his word *flesh*, to be devoured
 “ by the ear, ruminated upon by the mind,
 “ and digested by faith.” *Origen* ‡ says,
 “ We are said to drink of his blood, when
 “ we receive his word, in which life con-
 “ sists; and that he feeds mankind with
 “ the flesh and blood of his word, as with
 “ pure meat and drink.” *Eusebius* || says
 expressly, “ His word and doctrine are
 “ flesh and blood.” And *Jerom* † says,
 “ In the true sense, the body and blood
 “ of Christ, is the word and doctrine of
 “ the scripture.”

And now, I think it seems plain upon
 the whole, That this discourse of our Lord
 relates to his doctrine and instruction, and
 must be understood in a spiritual and figu-
 rative sense; and that the Lord's-supper is
 not at all directly spoken of or intended,
 but quite another thing, as the proper sub-
 ject of it. Having spoken so largely of
 the

† Auditū devorandus, ruminandus intellectu, & fide di-
 gerendus. De Resur. carnis, cap. 36, 37.

‡ Orig. Homil. 16, 17.

|| ὥστε αὐτὰ ἐστὶ τὰ ρήματα καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα καὶ
 τὸ αἷμα. De Ecclesiast. Theol. l. 3. c. 12.

† Licet & de mysterio possit intelligi, tamen verius cor-
 pus Christi, & sanguis ejus, sermo scripturarum est. In
 Psal. 147.

the first enquiry, I shall need to be briefer on the second.

II. Whether if this discourse at all refer to the sacrament, there is any *ground* in it for the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*? And here I shall not propose to argue from the nature of the thing, but only from our Lord's discourse in this place; and that there is no sufficient ground for it, even upon that supposition, will appear from the following considerations.

1. If the Lord's-supper is not the *direct* subject of the discourse, but quite another thing, as we have shewed before; then nothing can be *inferred* from it, or built upon it, which relates to it. If our Lord is not professedly speaking of the sacrament, but of believing in him, and embracing his doctrine, then it cannot be inferred from hence, that we *eat his flesh, and drink his blood*, in a literal sense, in the Lord's-supper; for that would be an inference without any foundation, and would be inferring one thing of a quite different nature from another; as if I should say, 'tis mid-day because 'tis high tide, or dark night because 'tis low ebb, where there is no necessary connexion. We might at this rate infer any thing from any thing, and argue without any principles to proceed upon, and draw conclusions without premises.

If

If the true sense of these words has been rightly represented, there can be no pretence for the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* in them, and nothing but the meer *sound* of the words in two or three verses, without any regard to the true sense of them, or any relation to the context, and the evident occasion and design of the whole discourse. If the Lord's-supper is not the direct subject of it, however it may be alluded to, but spiritual eating and drinking by faith; a meer allusion can be no sufficient ground to raise any doctrine whatsoever, much less to justify any absurd and unreasonable opinion about it. It would be foreign to the matter, if the doctrine were never so true, and could not, at least, be inferred or proved from hence. This rank weed does not grow in this good soil: 'Tis no *plant of our heavenly Father's planting*. And this alone, if there was no other consideration, would be sufficient to strike off this pretence, and discharge this scripture from this service. But this is not all; for,

2. If there were any reference to the Lord's-supper in this discourse, it would evidently conclude the *wrong* way, and be so far from establishing *Transubstantiation*, that it would quite overthrow it. " *Transubstantiation is a wonderful conversion*
 " *of the whole substance of bread and*
 " *wine in the Lord's-supper, into the*
 " *whole body and blood of Christ, so*
 " *that there is no substance of bread and*

D

" wine

“ wine remaining, but only the accidents
 “ and appearances of them.” Now it falls
 out very unhappily here, that the whole
 turn of our Lord’s discourse is quite oppo-
 site to this; for he speaks of himself as be-
 come *bread*, and under the notion of *bread*;
 not of bread becoming *himself*. He does
 not say, The bread which you are to eat
 will become my body, and the wine, my
 blood; but he says on the contrary, *I am*
 35. *the bread of life: I am the living bread*
 51. *which came down from heaven; and the*
 58. *bread of God which came down from heaven.*
 He is the *living bread*, as well as the *bread*
of life, who is himself living, as well as
 gives life to others, which cannot be said
 55. of any other bread. So my *flesh is meat*
 * αληθινός. *indeed,* my blood drink indeed; as he is the*
true light and the true vine, to signify not
 so much the *propriety* as the *excellency* of
 it; that ’tis perfect in its kind, and prefer-
 able to all others. This representation of
 himself runs thro’ the whole chapter. He
 came from heaven to be the living bread,
 on which we are to feed and be nourished;
 not the bread to become Christ, or his
 real flesh and blood. This plainly contra-
 dicts and overturns the doctrine of Tran-
 substantiation, instead of supporting, or gi-
 ving any countenance to it.

And when he speaks of *eating his flesh,*
and drinking his blood, it plainly relates to
 his *death*, and not to the *sacrament*; and
 means

means the same thing which he had before called *bread*. This appears in another verse where he joins them both together, and makes them equivalent expressions; *The BREAD which I give is my FLESH, which I give for the life of the world.* His *flesh* must be understood in the same sense, in which he is said to be *bread*; for they are parallel expressions in this discourse, and both given for the same end. In the same sense therefore in which he is *bread*, in the same sense we are to *eat* him; and as the one can only be understood in a spiritual sense, for Christ cannot be literally bread, so must the other, by necessary consequence, be understood too.

51.

And at this rate what must become of the doctrine of *communion in one kind*, when our Lord here expressly requires the *eating his flesh* AND *the drinking his blood*, as necessary to *everlasting life*: 'Tis his blood shed and poured forth, and not as contained in his body; the blood of his slain and crucified body, not of his living and glorified one; and we are to *drink*, and not to *eat* his blood: and so our Lord himself instituted it afterwards, when he said, *Drink ye all of it.* And tho' in a *figurative* sense they may both fitly signify the same thing, that is, believing in him; yet in a proper sense, as they understand it, it cannot signify the same thing, but two distinct things. So that *eating his flesh*,

Matt.
xxvi. 27.

and *drinking his blood*, cannot be understood in the sense of *Transubstantiation*, or eating his natural flesh in the sacrament, but only of spiritual feeding on his doctrine, or believing on him.

3. Then the *Capernaïtes* were in the right, and did not *misunderstand* his doctrine. They plainly understood him in a sense somewhat like that of *Transubstantiation*, tho' not altogether so absurd; and this was the ground of their offence, and of their leaving him at last: *The Jews*
 41. *murmured at him because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And*
 52. *how can this man give us his flesh to eat?*
 60. And some of his disciples said, *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* This occasioned their murmuring and offence. They plainly understood him in a gross and carnal sense, as if he meant to give them his natural flesh and blood to eat and drink, as the church of *Rome* understands it now.

Now then I ask, Whether they understood him right or wrong, and took his true meaning and design or not? If they understood him *right*, then why are they blamed; why does our Lord reprove them for their murmuring, and charge them with unbelief, and upbraid them for being offended?
 36. Why does he say, *Ye also have*
 64. *seen me and believed not?* And again, *There*
 61. *are some of you who believe not. Does this also offend you?* Why is this made an argument

gument of unreasonable prejudice and offence, and reckoned an error and fault in them? It was certainly a gross mistake of his meaning, and a great stupidity in them, to understand him in sounreasonable a sense, when he had dropt so many hints to secure his meaning, and such ways of expression were so usual and well known among the *Jews*. Will any man of sobriety and understanding pretend to justify the *Caper-naites*, and maintain that they understood him in the sense he designed? I am sure that several of the greatest interpreters in the church of *Rome* understand it otherwise, as cardinal *Cajetan*, *Janſonius*, and others; and the *council of Trent* itself, after long debates about it, thought fit to compromise the matter, and leave it undetermined. †

If, on the contrary, they understood him *wrong*, then *Transubstantiation* cannot be right, and that sense of the words must necessarily be false; for that cannot be right in the *one*, which was wrong in the *other*. If the *Jews* mistook his meaning, the *Papists* cannot take it right. They plainly run into the same error which he blamed here in the carnal *Jews*. If this was the thing intended in these expressions, then they understood him, in the main, right; and did not mistake his meaning; and there was no ground
of

† Utcunque juxta varias Patrum & Doctorum interpretationes intelligatur. *Conc. Trid. Sess. 21. c. 1.*

of offence, and forsaking him; or if there was, it was not owing to their *prejudices* and misunderstanding, but to the *nature* of his doctrine; and that indeed would always be a ground of offence to upright and disinterested men to the end of the world.

61, 62. 4. I argue from our Lord's *ascension* to heaven. This is referred to here: *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if you shall see the son of man ascending up where he was before?* Some understand these words to refer to their objection against his *parentage*, and his calling himself the *bread of life which came down from heaven*, which is mentioned in *ver. 58*.

You cannot wonder that I said I came down from heaven, when you shall see me ascend to heaven, and go up in a visible glory with the attendance of angels, from whence I came. This he often calls *going to the father*. He had spoken of this before; *No*
 Chap. iii. 13. *Man hath ascended up into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the son of man who is in heaven.* The same person was to ascend to heaven, who came down from heaven, and as a proof and evidence that he did so. And when he ascended to heaven, *he sat on the right hand of God*: He resides and dwells there, invested with the highest dignity, and sovereign authority, and therefore cannot be bodily present here on earth.

But

But the reference seems more likely to *ver. 56.* where he speaks of *eating his flesh*, and *eating him*, and *living by him*, and *living for ever*; and their objection to him upon that account, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* and, *This is a hard saying, who can bear it?* Which is the immediate connexion of the words, and relates to the disciples who were to see him ascend: In relation to this, he says, *What and if you shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before?* q. d. You cannot think of eating my flesh on earth, when you shall see me ascend to heaven. This will be a sensible demonstration to the contrary, and make the thought of it utterly unreasonable and absurd. It will appear impossible to eat my natural flesh, when you shall see me ascend, tho' you must always do it in the sense I intend. So one of antients * says, "He tells them of his ascension to draw off their minds from the gross conceptions of corporal eating his flesh."

This is plainly the force of our Lord's reasoning in this place; and tho' some men have found a way to bring down Christ from heaven to be sacrificed to God afresh, and continually devoured by men, yet this will reduce the matter to this plain opposition, that either *Transubstantiation* must destroy this reasoning of our Lord, or this reasoning will

* *ἵνα ἡ σωματικὴ ἐννοία αὐτῶν ἀφελύσῃ.* Athan. in illud Evang. *Quicumque dixerit.*

will destroy *Transubstantiation*: And which of these is the more reasonable, *judge ye within yourselves.*

I shall only further observe here, That tho' two or three of the antient writers chiefly after the third century, seemed to think, that this discourse might relate to the Lord's-supper, or at least be an *allusion* to it, and be fitly *accommodated* to it, as some devotional writers among the moderns also do; yet none of them ever understood it in the sense of *Transubstantiation*, or for literal eating his natural flesh, and drinking his blood, but only of eating and drinking him spiritually, and by faith, with respect to his doctrine and death; which tho' 'tis peculiarly proper in the ordinance of the Lord's-supper, yet was their present duty at that time, and is a necessary duty at all times, as well without the use of the sacrament, as with it. I shall only give you the testimony of St. *Austin* * to this purpose, tho' in his later writings, he was of the same opinion with the more antient Fathers, as appears in his book *De civitate Dei*. He lays down this excellent rule of interpreting scripture; " If the say-
" ing

* Si præceptiva est locutio, aut flagitium aut facinus vetans, aut beneficentiam jubens, non est figurata. Si autem flagitium aut facinus videtur juberi, aut utilitatem aut beneficentiam vetari, figurata est. *Nisi manducaveritis, inquit, carnem filii hominis, & sanguinem biberitis, vitam in vobis non habebitis.* Facinus vel flagitium videtur juberi, figura ergo est, præcipienti passioni Domini esse communicandum, & suaviter atque utiliter in memoria recondendum, quod caro ejus pro nobis crucifixa & vulnerata sit. *De Doctr. Christi, Lib. 3. c. 16.*

“ ing is preceptive, either forbidding a wicked action, or commanding to do that which is good, it is no *figurative* saying ; but if it seem to command any wicked thing, or forbid what is profitable and good, it is *figurative*. This saying, *Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*, seems to command a wicked and flagitious thing ; it is therefore a *figure*, enjoining us to communicate in the passion of our Lord, and lay it up in dear remembrance that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us.”

I might add, that when the heathens, by misinformation, objected to the Christians their eating of man's flesh, they rejected it with detestation, and retort it upon their adversaries with great aggravation ; which they could not have done with any reason and truth, or any modesty and shame, if this doctrine had been true, and they had so understood the matter. *

E

If

* Ἀνθρωπείων σαρκῶν βορρὰς ἐκινῶσιν οὐκ. We Christians don't own the eating of human flesh. *Iust. Mart. Apol. 2.*

Παύρῳ μὲν ἐκ ἔστιν ἀνθρωποφαγία. Tatian cont. Græcos.

Minutius Felix represents it as a calumny of the devil. Si ratio, non instigatio dæmonis iudicaret—His enim & hujusmodi fabulis iidem dæmones ad execrationis horrorem, imperitorum aures adversus nos referferunt—Sic est negotium dæmonum ; ab ipsis enim rumor falsus & feritur & fovetur. *Minutii Oæ.*

Tertullian says, They might be ashamed to object it to the Christians. Hæc qui editis quantum abestis à conviviis Christianorum.—Erubescat error vester Christianis, qui ne animalium quidem sanguinem in epulis esculentis habemus. *Apol. c. 9.*

If any after all should think it strange that our Lord should repeat and *continue* this figurative way of speaking throughout the chapter, and after so great a mistake of his meaning, and offence to the *Jews* and to some of the disciples; I shall only say, That as these expressions were well understood among the *Jews*, and agreeable to their manner of speaking, and he had given sufficient hints quite thro' the discourse, to lead them to his true meaning, and prevent mistake, to honest and attentive minds, and accordingly we find the twelve understood his meaning, and took no offence at it; so it was very usual in our Lord's discourses to a mixed multitude, and when he had to do with unreasonable and prejudiced men, who shewed no disposition to receive and attend to his doctrine, but only to cavil and be offended, not to open his mind so freely that they could not mistake it, to put them upon enquiry, and for the exercise of their diligence, and the trial of their sincerity; perhaps too that they might not thro' their perverseness be hardened in their opposition to him. This is the reason assigned for his speaking to them so often in parables, *Matt. xiii. 13.*

I shall conclude all with two *remarks* of a different kind, from what has been said. The one is, That there is no foundation in scripture for the antient custom of *communicating infants*. This practice began early,
and

and continued a considerable time in the Christian church, chiefly in *Africa*, and is observed in some of the Eastern churches to this day.* But as it was plainly built upon a mistaken sense of these words, as if they related to the sacrament, and made it absolutely necessary to the salvation of every one; so when the words are rightly understood, there appears no foundation or pretence for so strange a thing. Indeed it has been disused in the church of *Rome* for several centuries, which however right in itself, is no great mark of her *infallibility*, and strict adherence to the *unanimous* sense of the ancient Fathers in interpreting scripture, to which nevertheless their priests are sworn at their ordination.

The other thing I would remark here is of a practical nature, and more importance, That we should carefully attend to the *spiritual* meaning, and true design of this discourse, that is, that we believe on Christ to everlasting life, or receive his doctrine, and depend upon his death, who came from heaven to reveal the will of God to men, and to *give his flesh for the life of the world*. It will signify nothing to our acceptance with God, and eternal life, to renounce the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* and the errors of *Popery*, if we have no participation with Christ by believing in him; if we have *no part in him*, and are not made *partakers* ^{Joh. xiii. 8.}

E 2

* Ludolp. Hist. Ethiop. Lib. 3. c. 6.

Heb. iii. *takers of Christ; of his spiritual benefits by*
 14. *a living faith.*

As we have the clearest revelation of the will of God by him, and the free use of our *bible*, and many opportunities and helps for understanding it, which are denied the people in Popish countries; if we don't make an answerable improvement in a greater increase of knowledge and holiness, we shall incur a greater guilt and condemnation, and be more blameable, and more miserable than they. So our Lord tells *Caper-naum*, *Thou who art exalted up to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; and it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.* Protestants will perish with greater aggravation than *Papists*, as they have greater advantages for their salvation; and I doubt not, but the *errors* of the *Papists* will be less criminal than the *ignorance* of Protestants, their *zeal* may justly reproach our *neglects*, and Popish *superstition* will fare better than Protestant *profaneness* or *irreligion*.

Let us not satisfy ourselves with understanding the true *meaning* of the words, but attend to the great *design* of them, to bring us to true faith in Christ, and to imbibe and digest his doctrine, or *mingles the word we hear with faith, that we may profit by it.* Let us be chiefly concerned about *eternal life*, to which he leads our thoughts quite through this discourse, and not be diverted by worldly cares, or unreasonable prejudice, from pursuing the great end of his doctrine

Heb. iv.
 2

doctrine and death, and the principal care and business of our lives. As he took occasion from earthly things, from the *loaves* and *manna*, to speak of spiritual and heavenly things, let us be excited by our daily diligence and care about lower things, to a more earnest and vigorous concern about spiritual good, and to *labour for the meat which perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting life*. If we attend only to the present advantage by him, and rest in a meer outward profession, as the *Jews* here followed him for *the loaves*, we shall be in danger of being *offended*, and *forsaking* him too; especially if difficulties and trials should arise: but if we consider him as having the *words of eternal life*, we shall say with the apostle, *Lord to whom shall we go but only unto thee?* and closely adhere to him, and *continue in his word*. If our hearts are *established by grace*, we shall not be *carried about with diverse and strange* Heb. xiii. *doctrines*, nor like *children be tossed to and fro*, and *carried about with every wind of doctrine*, from whatsoever quarter it blows, Eph. iv. *by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness* 14. *whereby they lie in wait to deceive*. If we heartily embrace his doctrine by a sound faith and subjection of soul, and feed upon the *bread of life* for our daily nourishment and strength, we shall have *everlasting life* by him, and be *raised up at the last day*.

F I N I S.

P. 4. l. penult. for *Our Lord having*, read *When our Lord*.
P. 16. l. 23. read *nobler*.



*Printed and Sold by R. FORD, and
R. HETT.*

I. **T**HE Reasonableness of believing in Christ,
and the Unreasonableness of Infidelity ; in two
Sermons preached at the Merchants Lecture in *Salters-
Hall, May 21, 28, 1728.* With an Appendix,
containing brief Remarks upon the Case of *Lazarus*,
relating to Mr. *Woolston's* fifth Discourse of Miracles.
By W. HARRIS, D. D. The Second Edition cor-
rected.

4 OC 58

II. Lukewarmness in Religion represented and re-
proved ; in two Sermons preached at the Merchants
Lecture, *Novemb. 2, 16, 1731.* To which is ad-
ded, a Discourse concerning false Zeal. By the
same Author.

123456789101112131415161718192021222324252627282930313233343536373839404142434445464748495051525354555657585960616263646566676869707172737475767778798081828384858687888990919293949596979899100